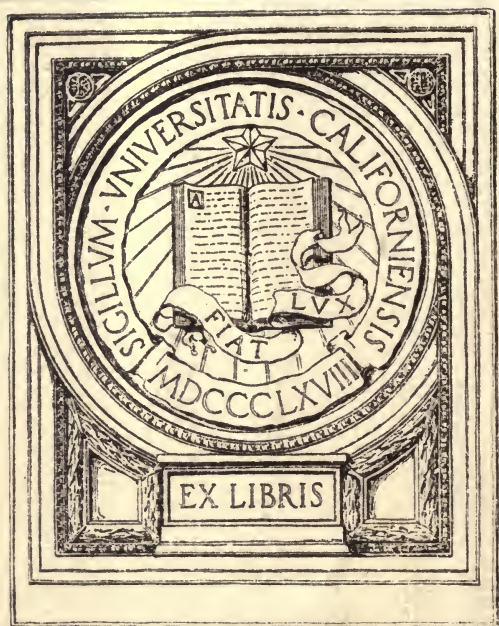


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FOURTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

Society of California Pioneers.

ORATION:

BY REV. HENRY W. BELLOWS.

POEM:

BY FRANK BRET HARTE, ESQ.



SAN FRANCISCO:

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1864.

[*From the Alta California.*]

CALIFORNIA PIONEERS.

CELEBRATION OF THE FOURTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADMISSION OF CALIFORNIA INTO THE UNION.

The fourteenth anniversary of the admission of California into the Union, was duly celebrated by the Pioneer Association on the 9th of September. The day was exceedingly auspicious for a public demonstration, and at the hour appointed for assembling in the Hall, large numbers of the Society were present.

About 1½ o'clock the procession, under the direction of CHAS. R. BOND, Esq., Marshal of the Society, preceded by the splendid Band of Chris. Andres, formed in front of the Hall, and in the following order took up their line of march : First, the Band, and next, the President of the Pioneers, J. W. WINANS, Esq., officers and members of the first class, making some fifteen members, and all wearing the red rosette. The officers and ex-officers wore yellow scarfs. The flags of the Society and the Union were also borne in the procession, the former by A. D. PIPER, and the latter by S. F. KEM. A barouche, containing the Orator of the Day, Rev. Dr. H. W. BELLOWES, and Chaplain, Rev. ALBERT WILLIAMS, followed. The second class or '49 Pioneers, numbering two hundred and seventy eight members, each wearing the white rosette, completed the procession.

Amongst the members we observed the veteran General John A. Sutter, Hon. Stephen J. Field, Hon. T. G. Phelps, and Ex-Presidents Brannan, Roach, Sutton and Abell. The

procession moved down Montgomery street to California, through California to Market, through Market to Montgomery, and up Montgomery to Pine, and along Pine to Maguire's Academy of Music. Here the band halted and played an inspiring air, whilst the Pioneers entered the building. The stage and parquette having been reserved for their accommodation, were speedily filled. The dress-circle was occupied by ladies, and the upper tiers by the public generally. Throughout the route of the procession, the sidewalks and windows of the buildings on either side were filled with the admiring multitude, who seemed to gaze with peculiar interest upon these founders of this great Pacific State.

EXERCISES AT THE THEATRE.

The band occupying the orchestra box played a national air, when the President announced that the Chaplain would offer a prayer, which he did in eloquent and fervent language. More music from the band, and then the President announced that owing to the unavoidable absence of FRANK BRET HARTE, the poet of the day, the REV. DR. BELLOWES would read the poem, which he proceeded to do, making the most of the many stirring and truly poetic thoughts and sentiments therein contained. The band again played, after which the orator delivered his address.

It was a masterly production, the theme being "California and Californians." For originality of thought, felicity of expression, humor, pathos, patriotism, and novelty, it has never been equalled by any similar address heretofore delivered before this time-honored Association.

The benediction by the Chaplain closed the literary portion of the exercises. The procession returned to their Hall in the same order as they marched to the Academy.

THE COLLATION.

The social festivities in the Hall partook of an intellectual character, also. After the viands had been duly disposed of, and the inner man refreshed, both by choice edibles and fluids.

The President called the brethren to order. He proposed as the first regular toast :

"The President of the United States."

To this sentiment Dr. Bellows responded in a very happy vein, and seized upon the occasion to pay a passing tribute to the energy, honesty and patriotism of our next, as of our present Executive, Abraham Lincoln.

The only other regular toast given was "*The State of California*," to which E. H. Washburn, Esq., made a glowing speech in response, which elicited great applause.

Volunteer sentiments and speeches followed in rapid succession, toasts being proposed to the "Army and Navy," "General Sutter," "The Clergy," "General Sherman," and others.

At the mention of the hero of Atlanta's name, there was a spontaneous burst of enthusiasm, which made the welkin ring.

Dr. Bellows was again pressed into the arena, and passed a beautiful eulogium on the brave Pioneer.

Whilst the festivities were at their height, Grant's letter endorsing the nomination of Lincoln, was brought in, and read by the President. Long-continued cheering followed, only interrupted by brief tributes to the valor of the Lieutenant-General, by patriotic members. The President, in the earlier part of the festivities, toasted the Orator of the Day in a speech fraught with eloquence and feeling. For hours the feast of reason and flow of soul continued, and not until the shades of evening began to fall, did the Society of California Pioneers conclude their celebration of the natal day of the State, founded by themselves on these shores of the Occident.

ORATION.

PIONEERS :

In the hurry of the short and intensely occupied visit to this coast, and in press of the few last days of my stay, I find myself called by your partiality to the honorable privilege of addressing you on the fourteenth anniversary of your revered, if not venerable, organization. It would be folly in me, with my recent and superficial acquaintance with the local history of California, to enter into an unequal rivalry with the native Orators, who have exhausted, on your previous festival days, all that your public and private libraries afford, and all that the memory of the oldest settlers contain in the elucidation of the discovery, successive occupation, and final conquest by the American Flag, of this Golden Soil. I have participated in none of the trials, and am flavored with none of the arduous but rich experiences, which can alone qualify or entitle any man to treat that great theme. Nay, I am confident that you called me to this position to-day for the very reason that I am a stranger among you, receiving his first rude impressions of your country, and with the expectation of deriving your satisfaction mainly from feeling your own riper views contrasted with those of a mere novice in your region. I intend to gratify you, therefore, by not studying profundity, affecting a knowledge I do not possess, or an experience I have not suffered or enjoyed, but simply and frankly telling you how your country strikes me—not presuming that my opinions are valuable, permanent or instructive, but only that you possess at least curiosity enough to give an hour to hearing what they are. I do not forget however, that this is an important occasion. It is impossible to revisit the cradle of a powerful State without emotion. And you, Pioneers, who rocked that cradle, al-

though yet in the prime of your lives, cannot but feel as you recall the first motions your own arms gave it, how much controlled by a Power above you, and directed to ends far beyond your own purposes, were all the movements of what was then deemed either accident or choice. The infant Hercules, you swathed and lullabied was no demigod in your eyes ; the Kingly State, now wearing a golden diadem upon his head, a silver sceptre in his hand, was then a puling babe, nursed at no mother's bosom ; a foundling brought up in tents by masculine hands, vagrants at that, and ready to suck his rind of pork in place of any tenderer pap. He sat on the edge of his foster father's Long Tom, and got his softest rocking there. His milk, was from the cocoa nuts of the Isthmus, or the creamy contents of the miners' ditch. He had no brother, for children were not known in those bachelor days ; and no aunts or grandmother, for women were scarcer than gold in the time when Pioneers, finding among some rubbish a straw bonnet, quitted all work and danced about it in mad joy for the rest of the day. He could not toddle over the nursery floor, for there was not any nursery, nor any floor ; no grandam cautioned him against tumbling down stairs, for his house was only one story high, nor forbade him to risk his neck by looking out of the window, for sashes in his day had not come in. He never went crying to school, nor pouting to church. His alphabet dropped the alpha, and was only strong on the *Bet*. Exceedingly thirsty from the unusual dryness of the climate, he ran neither to the pump nor the pail, but with obliging indifference tapped the nearest vessel, barrel, keg or jug that contained a fluid, and left a pinch of dust from his muddy fingers, as he hurried to the next counter. For lack of other toys, he early played with fire-arms and cutlery, which sometimes went off suddenly in his hands, or flew out of them with the most unintentional violence, leaving a permanent vacancy where they lighted. His sugar-plums were quids of tobacco, and his soap-bubbles wreaths of fine cut. For a wooden horse, he rode a mustang, and when he jumped a rope he was dangling from a limb. His cup and ball was a bullet mould. He played "hide and seek" in the placer diggings, and if he was ever "tardy" it was not

in hunting for bigger claims. So this gypsy bantling grew—grew as nothing except your beats and squashes, your pears and plums ever grew, before or since, grew faster than that stick a man cut up in Yuba County and walked with a fortnight, and happening at night to set it down rather hard in the corner of the house outside, found it rooted so deep in the morning he could not pull it up ; so it grew and fourteen months after yielded a bushel of pears ; faster than the three lengths of fence the farmer built up in the Sacramento Valley, which grew all round his farm while he was gone down to Frisco for supplies. I put it to you, ye candid Pioneers! did you suspect what this rough boy, who sowed, I suppose, all those “wild oats” that now enrich your State, but at a great expense to his own passing reputation, was coming to? Yet here he is, a hard-working, calculating, earnest family man,—rather young to have assumed such responsibilities—with no very serious scars from his rough bringing up, who takes very naturally to in-door life, goes up and down stairs, without Indian awkwardness, does not positively insist upon drinking his Coffee without milk, his whiskey without water, or his soup without a spoon ; nay, who is not absolutely wedded to canvas houses and cotton partitions—through which every thing comes except comfort and privacy—but can even tolerate a Cosmopolitan Hotel, and sleep in the third story without dreaming of earthquakes, who supports public schools, as good as any in New England, as naturally as if he had learned his A. B. C. in a brick school house in one of the tortuous streets of Boston, and erects churches as costly and beautiful as are found any where in the country, not to speak of stores, stocked more extensively than most in New York, and a style of wooden houses unrivalled in beauty and workmanship, in costliness and comfort, any where in the world.

There may be those who affect to think it wonderful that California in fifteen years, should have essentially overtaken the civilization of the older portion of our country. But when we come to consider what extraordinary advantages she has enjoyed, it is on the whole not surprising that she has achieved so much, but only surprising that such a concurrence

of propitious circumstances should have united for her furtherance. Whenever before was such a population placed in such a province ; the new Potosi of the world, worked by the most energetic portion of the most energetic people of the youngest nation in history. With your golden ladle you skim the cream of American enterprise off thirty growing States, and then call the world to wonder that you pack so many lumps of golden butter, or rather buttery gold, into those iron firkins called bank vaults. You discard all the too young, and all the too old, from your population, straining emigration through your wide desert and your long or expensive lines of transportation round the Horn, or over the Isthmus, until nothing human reaches you that has not vigor in its arms and legs, and resolution and productiveness in its will and faculties, and then, with a people all in the prime of life, and all ambitious, capable, fertile in resource and patient in endurance, you feign surprise that you should have outstripped in your civilization, any rate hitherto on record, and made yourselves the "2.40" people on the race-course of history. To have a successive stream of middle-aged people thus feeding a population, instead of waiting for the slow process of generations to grow up and perish, and give place to succeeding waves of energy, is to work by "double shift," to abolish nights and have it always day ; is to condense centuries into lustres, and decades into months. And it is literally true, and not surprising either, that you have every year done the work of a generation. Remember, too, to qualify your self-complacency, that you have a *new* country, but are an *old* people. You represent the education, habits, tastes and experiences of the other slope ; were brought up among "folks," and had your notions, wants and standards essentially fixed before you came here. You are using "our thunder," to blast your rocks and make them give way to your wonderful roads, and to tear open the mountains and pluck away their golden entrails. You did not start here with strokes and pot-hooks, but had your fine-hand copy set you "at home." Your idea of civilization, with schools and churches, with Boards of Trade, and Colleges of Learning, with Street Rail-Roads, Aqueducts, Cemeteries

Agricultural Societies and Mechanical Fairs, was perfect when you came ; and it is far more than half the job completed, for a people to have well defined wants, fixed tastes and a unanimous and imperative instinct as to what they are driving at. If you had been obliged to grow up, as most peoples have had to do, feeling by slow and painful degrees, their way to improvement, inventing under the pressure of necessity, the arts and sciences, and slowly perfecting a social system, you would be at this time, "no-where" in the race of American States, instead of nearly in the van. And while you have had this secret standard of things at home, unconsciously animating, directing and shaping all your thoughts and aspirations, taking away the necessity of any deliberate plans, you have been remote enough from comparison, excited enough by success, and independent enough in your feelings, to be unconscious of any imitation and careless of any general result, and have therefore built up your civilization, as the coral insects build their marble palaces for the sea-nymphs, or the beaver his dam for the hatter, with a spontaneous freedom and a largeness of result, never bestowed on intentional and self-limited undertakings. If it were asked who planned and built the first era of California civilization, I should answer, those Titans and giants, who have every where laid in mythic courses, the foundations of great states ; the unconscious faculties of a race working under the inspiration of motives and influences too absorbing to be reflected upon ; the passionate concurrence of manly energies in a common work that none of them comprehended ; the *abandon* of America's most vigorous population, called as of old to a great "*raising*," and half in frolic and half in earnest, lifting in a day, timbers that a calculating generation have afterward gazed at with stupid wonderment how they ever found their places. Even now, the early history of your State, is escaping distinct recollection, is passing into golden mist, and resists sober description. Recent as it is, its strange, passionate character gives it an antiquity of its own. The faculties refuse to reproduce its curious story, and one is left to guess, surmise and reduce to prose, the poetry you all once felt, but cannot sing. I defy

any Pioneer to feel that California is young ; that 1849 was only fifteen calendar years ago ! It is for him a pre-noachic date ; anterior to the original, not the Sacramento, Flood : a time so remote that how he has ever lived to see these common days, and this vulgar era of 1864, or how he remembers even as well as he does, that misty morning of history, is a wonder and surprise ! A true Pioneer is ashamed of his present youthful looks ! He knows perfectly well that to be respectable and in keeping with his ancient experiences, he ought to have a head as white as the Sierras, or as bald as "El Capitan," to totter on a cane, and carry the decrepitudes of a century upon his gouty toes. As he looks in the glass and sees his teeth to be his own, his whiskers unturned, and his natural strength unabated, he secretly exclaims, "I am an imposter, I dreamed a dream, which I have palmed upon a credulous crowd of new folks who have come here at their ease within the last ten years, as the early history of California, at whose birth and babyhood, I claim to have assisted. But I have mistaken myself for my grandfather, or some remoter ancestor, because to be frank and honest, this ridiculous youthfulness of mine, added to the dimness of all my recollections clearly demonstrates that I am not the man I have passed myself off for." Thus it is, that all the great eras of the world, refuse to be questioned and strike dumb the witnesses of their own origin. The great doers are small talkers, and have short memories. The historians come long after the creators of history. Here and there, a blind poet who heard, but could not see the pother of his own great day, tells in an Homeric epic, which doubtless bears as much resemblance to the sober facts as a game of blindman's buff to what has often of late had its realization, the bandaged eyes of a hero, shot for deserting to the side of his own sacred flag—what henceforth passes for the seige of Troy ; and it is only in such precious parodies and immortal fictions, that we catch the flavor and spirit of times that can never be made a part of the sober history of the world ! As well hope to recall the extacies of our first tender passion, as write in cold blood that melodramatic fairy tale, the first decade of California life ! Perhaps, some weather-

beaten miner who never condescended to lay up a half eagle from his original sovereign contempt for economy in a country where every gulch was a till of coin, might still in the remoter Sierras, dozing on a grizzly bear skin, with his old rifle within reach, pull at his belt, roll over his quid, or lower his pipe, and spin a short yarn to his comrades which would have more of the color, flavor and reality of the early time in it than any but a first-rate poet will ever be able to reproduce. But alas, he will never be overheard by any body that can repeat his story, and the tragic-comedy, the Arabian tale of a history, you have yourselves not only passed through, but enacted, slips hopelessly from our grasp.

Let me then, abandoning all hope of understanding the causes of things, give you, in what remains, a very few of the impressions, your present civilization makes upon me. I will name only four.

I.—I am profoundly impressed with the enormous amount of bodily labor of which your State has been the scene. Not only in the prodigious leveling of the hills to make the ground of your commercial capital—a leveling so much to be deplored; since their terracing, in place of this awfully scarred, and, from the water, most repulsive view of your city, would have given you something such a charming and finished aspect as Sydney wears—but in the numerous and magnificent roads that cross your mountains all the way from Los Angeles to Siskiyou, and from your Bay to the Carson River. When and where, at your costly rates of labor came the hands that built these almost trans-Alpine roads? Perhaps, however, the enormous tolls they gather in might suggest an answer, and I had myself a glimpse of the truth, after driving in a private carriage about Nevada Territory, for a week, where the intervals between the toll-gates hardly gave my host time to button up his pocket, and suggested the idea of a machine to be attached to the carriage that should regularly drop a dollar in the road every five minutes, without trouble to the driver! Consider, too, a State whose hills and mountains have been hydraulicked and run off in sluices until the skipping of the hills like rams becomes a prosaic statement, for they run like

fawns, and very much of their tawny color ! Your river courses have been turned often enough to bury ten thousand Alarics in their beds, and you have dug up their bottoms till they refuse any more to show them. What gulch, or hollow has escaped your picks and spades ? Your road-sides look as if some vast contractor has just brought together the materials, the stone and the gravel, for paving a thousand miles of way, and having received his pay, had considered the job finished, tho' the road was not. You have turned over the soil of California till it looks as if it never would lie easy again ! If ever an ugly demon of scarification had his wanton way in defacing the natural beauty of a country, name him "*Placer Diggings, Esq.*" Why, the desolations of Quartz-Mining, laborious as that vast business is, leaving great cities on a crust of subterraneous emptiness, and burying more timber in their shoring up, as is said of Virginia City, than there is built into the town alone—with all their gigantic tunnels and galleries, are beauty itself compared with the surface mining ! One hears with a kind of pitying relief for the poor earth, that the Placer Diggings are giving out, and that some chance is now open for the unvindictive fingers of nature, to bandage these wounds with the grasses of the spring, to balsam them with dew and rain, and efface the scars that cupidity made, with the generous oblivion of her summer verdure. If, to mining toil, we add the immense ditching which make the hydraulic labor and skill of the interior and the foot-hills, a ceaseless wonder ; the fencing of fields ; the erection of homes for 600,000 people with all the work exhibited in the great City of San Francisco in its vast and admirable Hotels, large and beautiful Churches, noble and costly stores, numerous, tasteful and permanent homes, (I wish I could add substantial wharves,) we have an amount of physical labor represented here such as I doubt if any thing in history, space and time being considered, can equal, if it be not the amount of bodily toil sustained by our armies, in the earth-works, rifle-pits and fortifications, to which they have bent their noble limbs, to an extent utterly unknown to any who have not followed them through the whole three and a half years of the war.

ORATION.

II.—Next to quantity of labor already done in California, I have been impressed with the high *quality* of the domestic products of the State, the Minerva finish with which the young arts and industries spring into life from the teeming brain of your Olympian civilization. Your blankets, and woollen fabrics, your cutlery, your harness and saddlery, your glass, your macaroni, your flour, your iron castings, your machinery, your house carpentry, your extemporized buildings—all indicate a standard of aspiration, which is to be satisfied only with the last degree of excellence. California seems to have adopted for a motto, the quizzical saying of a New England farmer, I once knew—"The best is good enough for me." The present exhibition of the Mechanics Institute, has struck me with more surprise and animated me with more buoyant hopes of this State, than the most flattering array of ores, or the most splendid show of gold and silver. The multiplicity, variety and vigor of mechanical labor, the number and complexity of industrial arts, is the true test of a people's capacity for a high civilization. A monotonous industry even more than her slavery, which however produced it, was the ruin of the Southern States. The labors they despised, the humble arts they left other States to cultivate for them, were the neglected conditions of their own real prosperity. The wealth of a State is the mind of its people, and that mind only a varied industry can develop, or save from torpor, monotony, superstition, and enslavement. It is as important to the moral and intellectual education, as to the external prosperity of a state (and they always really go together) to possess a varied industry. California, great as her agricultural, great as her mining interests are, is evidently destined to be also a manufacturing State. This city from the scarcity of coal at any point not reached by water, and from its solitary harbor, must be the chief seat of your manufactures; and it does not surprise me to see it grow at the apparent expense of all the other towns in the state. Its growth is not unnatural. It is alike, the New York, the Chicago and the Lowell of the Pacific slope, uniting the treble advantages of the commercial depot, the granary, and the workshop of the coast. Before quitting this point let me say

that the Fair building which has so suddenly lifted its towering diadem in the heart of the city, its graceful dome, a bubble of redwood, which it was a sin to rob by covering of its exquisite glow of native color, is by far the most elegant and ambitious temporary building I have ever seen. No city but San Francisco would erect for a Mechanic's Fair such a costly yet ephemeral palace of Mechanic Arts—and for pregnancy of suggestion, promise of the future, and evidence of present condition, I should point with more pride as a Californian, to that exhibition, then to the 700 millions of gold and silver taken out of your soil or the 700 billions still remaining in it. I will say nothing of the great Sanitary Cheese, where the milk of five hundred cows for three days and a half, lies curded and pressed in a form in which if the fabled frog—that should have been a mouse—had swelled to the size of the ox he emulated, he might still have hid away his bulky proportions—but the whole display of fruits, especially of grapes, and of mechanical products, including the *First Carpet*, has sustained most abundantly my idea that QUALITY distinguishes the California taste as much as quantity. But need one do more than walk up and down your main or even your cross streets, to see that the California market tolerates no mediocrity? What splendid and costly stuffs adorn your shop-windows! Do any population in the world boot and shoe themselves, dress themselves, hat themselves, glove themselves, as well as your population? True! you pay for it roundly; but you are willing to pay. I sometimes fear you have adopted in sober earnest, the jest attributed to a now distinguished historian, who is said to have answered his father's remonstrances against his expensive habits, "Father, I can dispense with the necessaries of life, but the luxuries I must have"—a jest which has been reproduced in the concrete by a western lad, who complained to his Governor, "Father, I can wait for them new shoes, but I am suffering for a bosom-pin." Still, I cannot but admire and accept as a good augury; the love of excellence, in all fabrics, and in all products, whether material or intellectual, which marks this people, "*Aut Cæsar aut nullus*," might be inscribed upon its shield; "the best or none." And it seems to control the highest and the lowest things, whether

it be champagne and cigars, or butter and sugar, or knives and razors, or blankets and stockings, it is the *best* that finds the readiest sale. I hear that sorghum finds its greatest discouragement here, not in the unfriendliness of the soil or climate, but in the very natural preference of all the people, high and low, for sugar to what we boys used to call "long sweeting," and of loaf sugar to brown. It is a literal fact that I have never seen a spoonful of brown sugar on any table, public or private, in California, and that on meeting it the other day for the first time, some twenty miles beyond Yreka, I enquired where I was, and was answered that I had just passed over the Oregon line. Let me say, too, that the way-side Inns of your State, the remotest taverns—however unpromising their exterior, almost uniformly present a cleanly, a bountiful and a well served table, and are superior in this respect to any average presented in any other State or Country I have ever travelled through.

But even more marked is the impatience of this people with mediocrity of talents or qualifications in its public servants, whether those that amuse, or those that instruct it. In no community is excellence so prized, so quickly appreciated, so fully enjoyed; in none is common place, pretension, shallowness or even mediocrity, sooner detected or spurned. A foolish notion has prevailed at the East, that you could be managed, or taught, or amused by people of whom we there had got tired. But no mistake is greater. I find for instance, to my unaffected surprise, the standard of clerical requirement and the average of clerical ability, higher here than in any other portion of the United States. I am less able to speak of the legal or the medical professions, but I should be very much surprised if the analogy did not hold in them. The practical consequence of this peculiarity is, that in California, things do not begin at the *beginning*, but at the *middle*. It will not do here to begin with carrying the calf, promising by and by to carry the ox he will grow to. Nobody who cannot shoulder a heifer at the start, need expect to be waited for. It is of all countries in the world that in which physical, moral and pecuniary *Capital* is worth most. "To him who hath shall be given, and

he shall have in abundance" is verified in you. If any thing is to prosper here, be it a church, or a bank, or a stable, or a hotel, a business, or a pleasure, it must show from the start that it is going to succeed, and has vigor and ability to succeed, before anybody will touch it. There is no pity on weakness or inability in California.

III.—The next impression I get of a favorable character, is the unexampled equality and essential American Democracy of your population. It is impossible to judge a man's social or personal position here by the place you find him in. An educated professional man may be waiting behind your chair at the Hotel, or the Restaurant! The miner in a red shirt and tattered trowsers, may have been at home a millionaire, a minister, or a member of Congress. Your contempt for men whose sole merit lies in having so successfully descended from their grandmothers is another proof of your unconditional dignity. Indeed, all over the country, just now, the grandson of a President, or the great-grandson of a Duke, is not half so respectable as what we used to call in a very different spirit, "The son of a gun." Labor, enterprise and self-reliance are respectable every where, but they are truly respected here. I have never seen such self-poised manners in the so called laboring class; and instead of violence, rudeness and incivility, always looked for in new countries, I have every where encountered gentleness, civility and amiability. I hear it complained of that private, domestic service is uppish and disagreeable, but I have not seen it. If I were called on to name the only aristocracy of the State, I think I should be compelled to nominate the stage-drivers, as being on the whole the most lofty, arrogant, reserved and superior class of beings on the coast—the class that has inspired me with most terror and reverence. Their blazing red cravats, a white pocket handkerchief outside, yellow gloves, their tall white hats, occasionally varied with broad brimmed ones, their gloomy solemnity of manner as, with more than the gravity of the ermine, they mount the box, have filled my soul with a deeper sentiment of the sublime, than any other single exhibition, and induced me to propose them as the first order of Nobility, if ever

you adopt an aristocracy. What can be finer than their splendid reticence, their taciturn answers and their superior ways in general?—I have long noticed it as a peculiarity in all parts of America, that such was the general intelligence of our people, and the thought-marked character of their faces, such their means and disposition to dress themselves very much after one standard and pattern, that in a public car or a general assembly, you could not distinguish men as professional, as tradesmen, as laborers, except by carefully looking at their hands. But in California even this sign fails, for the roughest hands often belong to the man whose brains have had the finest culture, and his social training the first opportunities. The general scorn of wealth, as such, or as any claim to precedence is a noble offset to your universal pursuit of money; your contempt for men whose only excellence is in having so successfully descended from their grand-mothers, is another mark of your unconventional dignity. What can be finer than the irony which has invented the phrase that describes and holds up to public ridicule in one word, the whole mean and degraded class of persons, voluntarily living on the toleration, the charity, and the mercy of their neighbors. We have no name for that order in our country. It is too numerous! one half the people in all settled countries live on the toil and prudence and protection of the other half. But here you freely express your surprise, contempt and charity for that small and exceptional class, who can't, won't, or don't work by that inimitably funny, unmeaning, but most significant phrase, *Bummers!* The etymology of this rich word is to me both unknown and inscrutable. Whether it has any thing to do with hanging round the skirts of restaurants, taverns, billiard-rooms and banks, I cannot say, but the creature thus described is unmistakeable in this or any other country—although California alone has given him a name.

IV.—Finally, interior superiority to their external circumstances, is a controlling characteristic of Californians.—They are better than their houses, their clothes, their surroundings. I have found here in a tumble down tavern, a casual company of gentlemen at dinner, capable of the most intelli-

gent, agreeable and varied discourse. I have visited in a log cabin, accessible only through a yard where pigs and cattle disputed the way with you, families whose manners, talk and spirit would have adorned the choicest saloons of the oldest cities. It is this interior life that makes your people take so lightly and bravely the ups and downs of their lot. Rich to-day and poor to-morrow, to be rich again the day after, I hear little whining, despair or appeals to sympathy and compassion. It is a moral treat to find a people so superior to fortune.

Doubtless, California has her faults and weaknesses. She is generous, but she is also recklessly extravagant. She lives on her capital, not on her income. She despises every coin smaller than four bits, and never stops to consider whether or no she can really afford anything she wants, if only possessed of the means of paying for it down. Contempt for economy, impatience of savings, has a bad influence upon exactness, self-denial, prudence and that fore looking, which is man's chief prerogative. I think, too, that home-life is developing under somewhat unfavorable circumstances; that men and women have lived too much apart and became too used to separate pleasures and interests to domesticate easily, and with the happiest results. As a consequence, very unequal marriages are common and very unruly children as much so. Moreover, I do not see that women have here the usual marked moral and social superiority to men. Indeed, men have greatly the advantage of women in this country *out* of the cities—where drudgery and solitude oppress the female lot. The greatest of all California's misfortunes, however, is the delusion so hugged by her citizens that this is not their home. They are all working and acting with reference to a permanent establishment elsewhere. Not one in twenty will ever find it. The best and most useful son of California, is the one who most firmly and unreservedly says to himself, this is my state—to live and die in. Such citizens act by a different standard and serve their community on a different footing from those who are always envying every steamer's load that leaves the coast, and living with reference to their turn to go.

I notice, too, a habit of general profanity, and an irreverence of manner in sacred-places, which points to an undevout spirit. Indeed who can doubt that spiritual and religious life has fearful obstacles in this community, and that every serious and thoughtful Christian owes his influence night and day, to the support of those conservative and elevating institutions, the Sabbath, still so shamefully broken among you, by military parades, theatrical entertainments and public races; the Church, deserted by half your population, and the acting ministry of the gospel, fewer I hear in proportion to your numbers than in any other city in America. But against these discouragements, I place the one great crowning fact that no people in the world is so open to wholesome influence, so ready to follow wise and disinterested leadership, so plastic to improvement, so rapid in all kinds of progress, material, moral, social, political, as you are. The dregs settle sooner to the bottom, the goodness comes quicker to the top here than any where else.

I know no country in the world so rewarding to faithful diligence in any field of reform; no place where ability, worth, patriotism, eloquence, are more highly appraised, or more influential. Notwithstanding my criticism on those very points, I consider that general triumph of order, decorum of growing respect for the Sabbath, and of interest in religious institutions, imperfect as these still are, which has been obtained, within ten years, over the reign of violence, gambling, drunkenness, harlotry, open vice and public crime which then prevailed, unparalleled in rate and sum in the history of society—and what happened here, happened every where on this coast. The tether of sin and recklessness is very short. Their votaries fly hence to Nevada Territory, from there to Idaho—but there is no rest for them any where after a short revel. They are brought up with a round turn, and either die at the prompt hands of Justice Lynch, or flee into parts unknown. The tendency of things is healthy; strongly, hopefully, joyfully so, and I rejoice as an American citizen that California, with her, cornucopia of fruits and flowers, her largess of silver and gold, is to become the mother of men and women, who will

be worthy to inhabit a country, in so many respects, the most favored in the world.

Not to conclude in too serious a strain, let me draw your two pictures, and then, with one word for our Common Country, I will conclude. If I wished to give a stranger in the most rapid way, an idea of California, I would blindfold him the other side the Golden Gate, and take off his bandage in the middle of some mining town, or camp, like Murphy's or if a larger scale were desired, Placerville or Folsom. Between the scarred and hydraulicked sides of a gulch in the foot-hills, torn and disfigured as with the wicked sport of a band of tipsy Titans pelting each other with earth and stones, he should open his eyes upon a narrow street lined with one-story small wooden houses, with here and there a brick or stone building of two or three stories breaking the sky line into gappy irregularity, and with green iron shutters panelling the fronts. A few stores bursting with stocks of goods of a prodigious size and variety, compared with the apparent demand, should attest the difficulty of replenishing a business stock, the distance of the country from its base of supplies at New York, and the large capital involved in trade, accounting for the enormous prices demanded at retail.

Passing along, the fresh eye would note almost at once certain characteristic things; five or six saloons standing wide open, with enormous bars of liquors and still more extraordinary supplies of billiard tables, which no where else in the rudest hamlets are regarded as a first necessity of life. Next, four or five restaurants with small tables attended by a speckled population of English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Mexican, Chilian, Chinese, Indian and American servants—but in which great muffy Diggers, natural perukes, or else shaved pig-tailed Johns, form the most picturesque features. Three barber's shops, each big enough to shave a city in, with every possible extravagance of luxury in them, and some new wrinkle, on which to found an extra quarter's charge introduced once a week; next, a pair of solemn looking institutions, in which the dignity of a bench of Judges is ingeniously blended with the indignity of the *Stocks*, which gradually

develop themselves on the mystified stranger, as "the peculiar institution" of the country—in short a boot blacking establishment. Dont let me forget to point out two extensive and excellent bathing establishments connected with the barber's shops, and a half dozen laundries, where *John* is seen spiriting the water from his mouth upon a snow white shirt, and then smoothing it down with a brazier of live-coals ; three or four fruit-stores that make a stranger's mouth water ; six tobacco and segar cubby holes ; two stands of yellow novels, periodicals, and newspapers, illustrated and otherwise ; Wells & Fargo's express office, of course ; an apothecary shop, or drug store, whose stock would indicate that the people lived at least half on medicines, and especially quack medicines, politely known as Patent ; four or five small taverns, one or two unexpectedly comfortable ; the placard of the circus, for which you are to "wait," and the equestriculum, which you are "not to forget ;" and the concert which Messrs. Dodge & Hayward have come so far to charm you with ; not to speak of sundry most brilliant pictures of ladies in very short petticoats, and gentlemen in very tight breeches, sometimes unhappily in next to none at all, stuck on the street corners, and hanging in the barber's shops—for I never dared to enter the saloons ; in the distance, a wooden ditch of muddy water, elevated on a staging a hundred feet high, and in the road beneath it, the Pioneer Company's Stages, with nine inside, and fifteen a-top, the legs dangling round the entire roof, and forming a charming fringe, of boots, shoes and Chinese slippers for the delectation of the inside passengers, all dashing along, generally three or four of them, with six horses each, up to the tavern, where already stand the noble horses that are to relieve their sweating mates. If I add that about half the houses and stores have the words "to let" upon them, it will serve to indicate the uncertain effect, and "seen-better-days" character, which marks all mining towns that are not founded on a quartz basis.

If the stranger were not satisfied with this characteristic picture, I would bandage him up again and giving him over as a dull fellow for the interpretation of human and social physi-

ognoy, offer him one more chance to redeem himself by a glance at your scenery. First I would set him down at the charming door of the Big Tree Hotel, and after he had there recovered on excellent fare from the exhausting admiration awakened by the rare greenness, the smoothness and vastness of the hills among which his winding way up to the elevation he had reached had lain, an admiration forced out of him by those sugar pines, straight as arrows and from two to three hundred feet high, and six, eight and ten feet in diameter ; their bark mottled like an adder's skin, and suggesting the idea that some new Moses after having restored their erectness had changed back the serpents into rods fit for the wands of demigods,—I would carry him out into the grove—a grove such as no Druid ever worshipped in, where that great council of monarchs of the forest stands, surrounded by a court of Dryads, each of which would alone dignify any other scene. I would call his attention to the vigorous youth of these vast growths which a thousand years has not carried beyond their prime, and which a thousand years more will not humble to old age. Was ever the majesty of organized form, the mingled beauty and grandeur of vegetable growth, the solemn mystery of vital processes and the awing associations of lapsing ages, which these silent witnesses have seen come and depart, more impressively united ! How their grand boles flame up, columns of ruddy energy and beauty, fingers of light and power, in the dark forest that embosoms them ; how like vast Indian chiefs, in their old war paint, their tall plumes still nodding, they stand guardians of the hunting grounds of a thousand years ago !

If this vast victory of vegetative vitality did not bring our visitor to his knees, I would hurry him straight to Yo-Semite and imprison him before he was aware, in that most wondrous fortress of rock ; its green, meadowy floor, swept with the pullucid waters of the raging, playful, changing, mighty, meek Merced ; a floor, a mile down from the cornice of granite walls, that, steep as the sides of your city streets, hang in precipitous curtains of rock, now white, now brown, now black, fringed above with a vegetation, fine as box to look up at, coarse as timber land, to visit ; and below, edged with firs and

pines, too large for the masts of frigates, but dwarfed from above into bushes and tufts. Here garlanded with cataracts, that hang in bridal veils and flutter on the breeze, he should look up two thousand feet to see rivers darting over the brink, to flow and flow and flow, breaking in terror into splinters of watery wrath, exploding in pyrotechnics of fluid rockets, as if diamonds and pearls had suddenly taken on the qualities of shells and gunpowder. If these sublime combinations of rocks and waters, of chasms and precipices, over which beauty had poured her oil, and "smoothed the raven down of darkness till it smiled," did not suffice to awaken that pleasing terror, that exstastic pain, that purifies and exalts the sensitive soul, I would remand the insensate wretch, whose heart was dead, to the California Gehenna, and after treating him with a course of sulphur, alum, soda, magnesia, and epsom salts fresh from your great subterranean apothecary-shop at the Geysers—after riding him bare-back on the Hog's Back, not in the safe-keeping of Mr. Foss, fling him at last into the Witches' Cauldron, to be converted, not from the hopeless errors of his ways, but into the acids and alkalies that compose a cynical and unadmiring biped of the *genus homo*.

*
 Pioneers! My light task is almost done. Would that the Nation's solemn weighty work were as nearly complete! But let me ask you, if California means that the jewel she has wrought and hung among its peers, about the country's neck shall fall and roll into the sea, a prey to any maritime power that piratically watches to snatch it up, when the cord that strings our priceless beads is broken? Did you discover and add this El Dorado to the National Domain, to stand idly by, when the old soil was over-run with rebel parricides, and deny your part in the great and costly work of maintaining the institutions, which Pioneers like yourselves founded and handed down in tearful, prayerful faith to your sacred keeping? No there is not a vein in your golden leads you would not bleed to its last drop to supply the arteries that run with the life blood of your country! There is not a heart in an honest Pioneer's bosom, that does not burst with longing for the res-

toration of the Nation's security, the stability of the great American Temple of Liberty. And Pioneers! you have conquered too many enemies, space and drought, and ocean, and isthmus, and isolation and fire and flood, and violence and crime, not to know that all things are possible to them that believe in the divine right of institutions as equal, just and blessed as ours. You are not dismayed because moral cowards and political infidels at home and abroad, point you to the hallowed graves of a quarter of a million of American hearts that have died for their country! You have smoothed the pathway of those victims and are waiting to alleviate the fresh sorrows that arise, and you answer, it is worth a quarter of a million more, and ours among them! You spurn the filthy calculation of the worth of National existence in hundreds of millions, more or less. All it costs, be it millions or billions, it is cheap at! And when the National cannon, echo as yesterday from Fort Columbus, in Boston Harbor, to Alcatraz, the glorious victory of your own Sherman at Atlanta, how far do you think the party processions which take the season of National rejoicing, to provide for the defeat of the Government that has achieved these triumphs at Mobile and in Georgia, will stretch their cheap and manufactured influence? I solemnly declare that in that great opposition meeting in Union Square, New York, of which so much is made in some Secesh prints, hardly one single man figured, as President, Vice President, Secretary, or Orator, whose weight and respectability, whose good sense or even whose name, gives him the least real social, moral or political influence where he is known—if any such place can be found. The meeting was a monstrous imposture, such as New York is abundantly capable of getting up. It had no effect at home; it ought to have none here.

No, Pioneers! The re-election of our chief magistrate is a foregone conclusion, as the result of the war is already a fixed destiny. You have only to continue your allegiance, which no distance can weaken, no trials abate, and California, blazing in her native lustre, will find herself shining a gem of purest

water in a diadem where every State lends its appropriate jewel, not one tarnished or missing; and all crowning a Union and a Nationality that stretches from sea to sea, and from Time to Eternity.



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P O E M ,

By FRANK BRET HARTE, Esq.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA PIONEERS ON THE FOURTEENTH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADMISSION OF CALIFORNIA INTO THE UNION.

Once more we meet, though in our native East
The sun that glitters on our birthday feast
Glanced as he rose on fields whose dewes were blent
With deeper tints than those Aurora lent ;
Though shorn his rays, his welcome disc concealed
In the dim smoke that veiled each battle-field,
Still striving upward, in meridian pride,
He climbed the wall that East and West divide—
Saw his bright face flashed back from golden sand,
And the calm sea that laves our western land.

Strange was the contrast that such scenes disclose
From his high vantage o'er eternal snows :
There War's alarm the brazen trumpet rings—
Here his love song the mailed cicala sings ;
There bayonets glitter through the forest glades—
Here yellow cornfields stack their peaceful blades ;
There the deep trench where Valor finds a grave—
Here the long ditch that curbs the peaceful wave ;
There the bold sapper with his lighted train—
Here the dark tunnel and its stores of grain,
Here the full harvest and the wain's advance—
There the Grim Reaper and the ambulance.

Through scenes so adverse, what mysterious bond
Links our fair fortunes and the shores beyond ?
Why come we here—last of a scattered fold—
To pour fresh metal in the broken mould ?
To yield our tribute, stamped with Cæsar's face,
To Cæsar, stricken in the market place ?

Ah, Love of Country is the secret tie
That joins these contrasts 'neath the arching sky ;
Though brighter paths our peaceful steps explore—
We meet together at the Nation's door,
War winds her horn, and giant cliffs go down
Like the high walls that girt the sacred town,
And leaves a pathway to her throbbing heart,
From clustered village and from crowded mart.

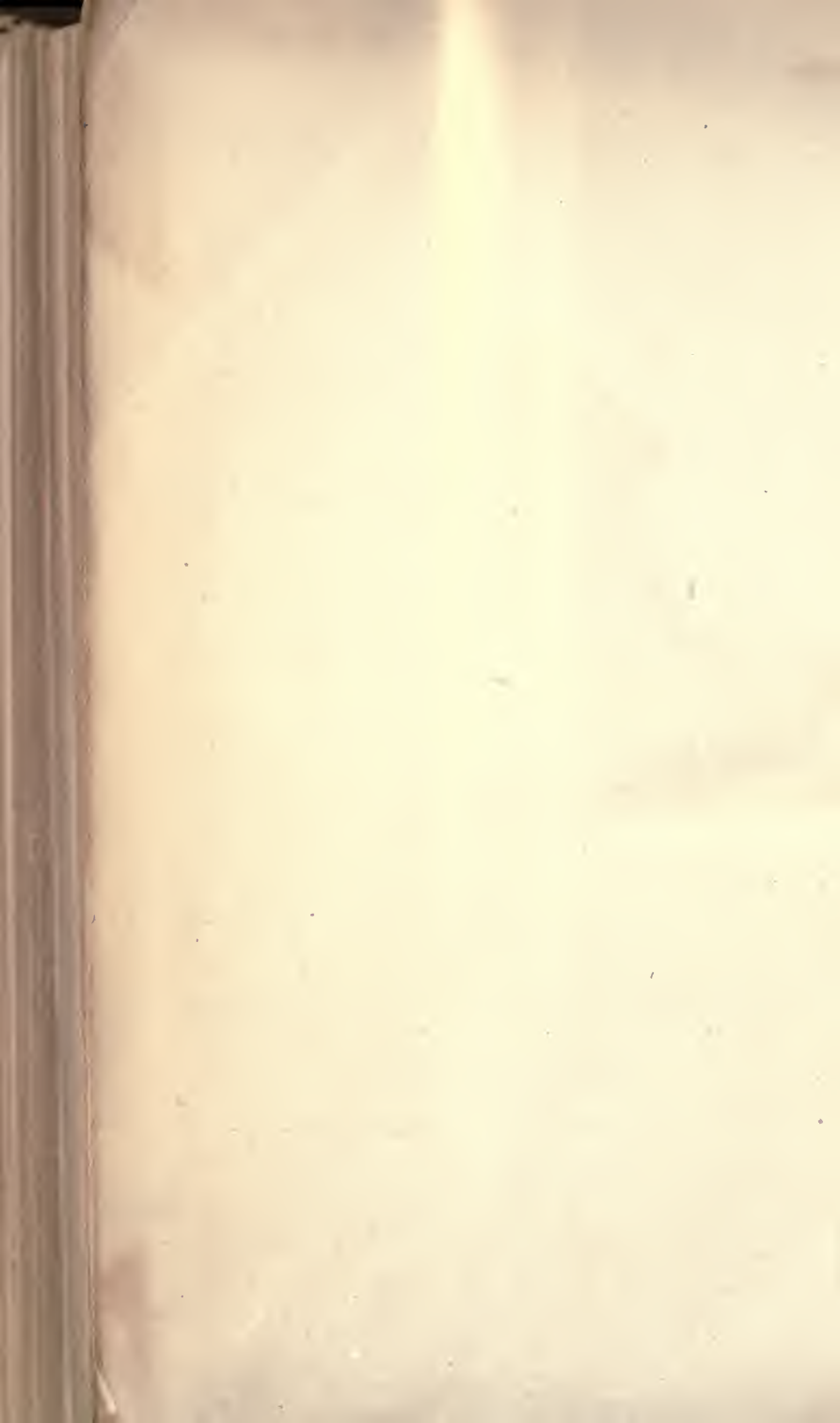
Part of God's providence it was to found
A nation's bulwark on this chosen ground—
Not Jesuit's zeal nor Pioneer's unrest
Planted these pickets in the distant West ;
But He who first the nation's fate forecast
Placed here his fountains sealed for ages past,
Rock-ribbed and guarded till the coming time,
Should fit the people for their work sublime ;
When a new Moses with his rod of steel
Smote the tall cliffs with one wide-ringing peal,
And the old miracle the record told
To the new nation was revealed in Gold.

Judge not too idly that our toils are mean,
Though no new levies marshal on our green ;
Nor deem too rashly that our gains are small,
Weighed with prizes for which heroes fall
See, where thick vapor wreathes the battle line ;
There Mercy follows with her oil and wine ;
Or, where brown Labor with its peaceful charm,
Stiffens the sinews of the Nation's arm.
What nerves its hand to strike a deadlier blow,
And hurl its legions on the rebel foe ?
Lo, for each town new rising o'er our State
See rebel hamlets waste and desolate,
While each new factory, with its chimney tall,
Seems a fresh mortar trained on Richmond's wall.

For this, O brothers swings the fruitful vine,
Spread our broad pastures with their countless kine ;

For this o'erhead the arching vault springs clear,
Sunlit and cloudless for 'one half the year :
For this no snow-flake, e'er so lightly pressed,
Chills the warm impulse of our mother's breast :
Quick to reply, from meadows brown and sere,
She thrills responsive to spring's earliest tear ;
Breaks into blossom, flings her loveliest rose
Ere the white crocus mounts Atlantic snows ;
And the example of her liberal creed
Teaches the lesson that to day we heed.

Thus ours the lot with peaceful, generous hand
To spread our bounty o'er the suffering land :
As the deep cleft in Mariposa's wall
Hurls a vast river splintering in its fall—
Though the rapt soul who stands in awe below,
Sees but the arching of the promised bow—
Lo, the far streamlet drinks its dews unseen,
And the whole valley laughs a brighter green.





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